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HALF THE BATTLE

BY

B.B.

ISSUED BY TOC H, 1922

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# HALF THE BATTLE

*By B. B.*

*"To conquer hate would be to end the strife of all the ages,  
but for men to know one another is not difficult, and it is half  
the battle."*



**ISSUED BY TOC H.**

(TALBOT HOUSE, ONCE OF POOPERINGHE & YPRES)

123, St. George's Square, London, S.W.1

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*January, 1922.*

Price 10 Cents.



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# HALF THE BATTLE

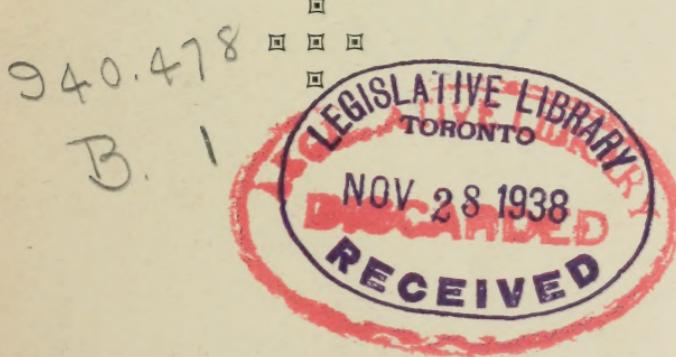
By B. B.



Watkins-Petford, Denys James  
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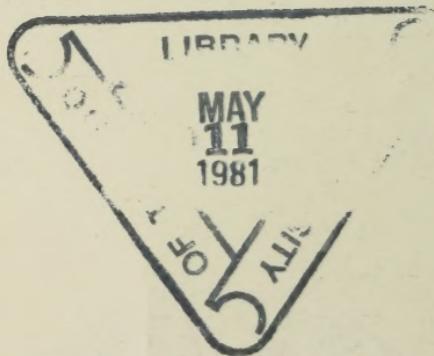
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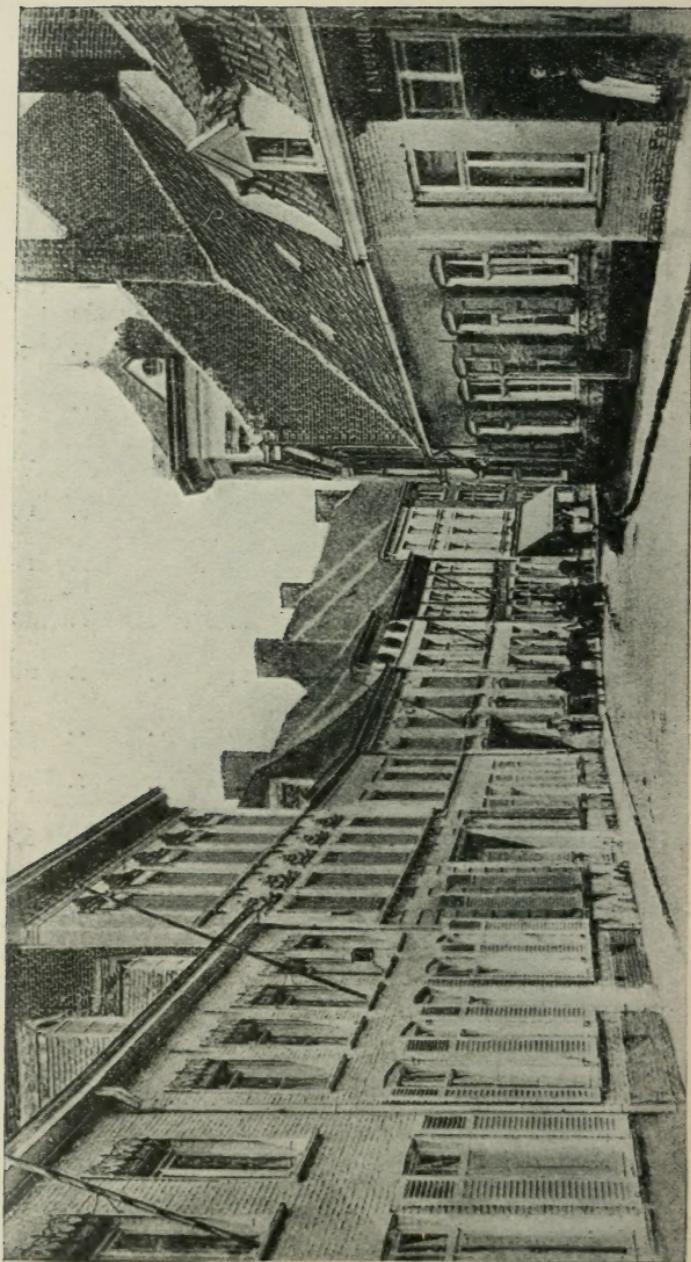
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A house which summed up more completely than anything else the character of Pop. at its best (p. 8).

## INTRODUCTION.

### HAVING SEEN THE PROOFS THEREOF.

GRATITUDE has a habit of evaporating when expressed, and in a weak solution depresses both its object and the onlookers. Good men therefore dislike rose water ; and it is ill requital to such an one to make the happiness he gives us the occasion of acute discomfort to himself. It is enough therefore to say that if B.B. had written something less good, he would have been punished with a thanking. As it is, he shall be reprieved.

There are, however, just three things of which no reader should remain in ignorance. First, B.B. *interfuit, et ita posuit*, and indeed for some men to see a thing is instinctively to help it forward. His official task "over there" was the administration of a great machine in a wide area, and upon him hung "the care of all the churches." None the less, he continued to do more for Toc H. than most men, adjusting incalculable antinomies, disentangling the diurnal distresses, fanning hopes and sterilising solicitudes, as he came and went and came again. When indeed did the wheels of his convenient chariot tarry, or the cruse of his loving kindness fail?

Secondly, since we were brought together again shortly after the re-trek of Toc H., the inner history has been of the most cyclic order. I have promised, and he has performed. These very pages are indeed due to such a pleasant method of co-operation, and their likely readiness for the Canadian campaign of Toc H. can only be ascribed to certain nights of his when his watch stopped and his pen ran on to meet dawn a-tipoe with printers' devils.

Finally, brethren, what of the things he says ? If they are sooth in your finding, we must between ourselves find something more counteractive than a verdict of condemnation. It is hard to believe that France and Britain between them lost in those four years as many men as there are now alive in Canada. It is harder still to be content with a reversion to that series of mutual misunderstandings which They died to disannul. If we would be kind to our Dead, or continue to call them comrades, we must be able to face them without flinching, when they ask us what we have done with their sufferings and sacrifices. They are intensely eager to see good come flowing out of all this tragedy. If we care for them, or for their judgment of us, we must be in earnest to help accomplish those things for which they rescued and redeemed the race. As we of Toc H. see it, an instrument is here being tempered that may play its part in such achievement. True, one of the main tasks of Toc H. in England is scarcely a task at all in Canada ; and it is hard for the Canadian mind to realise how deep is the cleavage still in the old country between one class and another. Our second purpose holds on both sides of the Atlantic. It was once a threat that "the Elder should serve the younger." With us, it has become a Beatitude ; and the Veteran who is not concerned with the transmission of all that is best in his traditions to the younger world, by work, example, influence had better have changed places with a clearer-sighted and cleaner-hearted man yonder. Lastly, Toc H. stands to challenge those who are tempted to let secondary and material losses invade the holy place. The truth, as we see it, is simply that there is a dangerous shortage of good men. This spiritual issue is paramount ; and we must liberate all the good that is in us every one, and link it in a living Tether, if we are to help bring about some better thing indeed.

P. B. CLAYTON,

New Year's Eve, 1921.

*Padre of Toc H.*

## A NOTE ON NAMES.

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1. *Talbot House*, in Poperinghe, opened on December 15, 1915, was named after Gilbert Talbot, Lieut., Rifle Brigade, who was killed at Hooge on July 30th, 1915. He was the youngest son of the Bishop of Winchester, and of him it has been said that he would have been to English public life what Rupert Brooke began to be to English letters. His elder brother, Neville Talbot, then senior padre of the 6th Division and now Bishop of Pretoria, helped to found the House. *Little Talbot House* in Ypres was named after its parent in Poperinghe.

2. *Toc H.* is merely an affectionate diminutive for *Talbot House*. It explains itself to soldiers, but needs translation for the benefit of others. To avoid dangerous confusions between A and K, or between B, D and T, &c., in transmitting messages orally, the Army signaller used an alphabet of his own, which began *Ack* (e.g., *Ack Emma* = a.m.), *Beer*, *C*, *Don* . . . and in which *Toc* stood for *T*. *Toc H.*, therefore = *T.H.* = *Talbot House*. This form of the name was not adopted just for fun, but because a Women's Settlement in Camberwell, London, S.E. (founded by Dr. Talbot when Bishop of Southwark) already bore the name *Talbot House* before the war, and confusion would have been inevitable.

3. *Mark* has long been a term in the Army to denote a particular pattern in a series of anything; cartridges and shells, for instance, are stamped *Mark So-and-So*. It has been adopted by *Toc H.* as a convenient way of naming its hostels, in the order of their foundation, *Mark I*, *Mark II*, &c.

## I.—THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT.\*

FOR over four years, as most people still remember, the enemy looked towards Ypres as one of his most coveted goals, and expended on it daily, almost hourly effort of some kind, not to mention three battles for it on the grand scale. The ancient city itself, together with many miles of farm-land in front of it and several behind, recorded this history most faithfully ; day by day it grew shabbier and yet more glorious, less habitable and more inhabited. What it lost in commercial value to the Belgian citizen, it more than gained to the British race as a symbol of unity of idea and fortitude of body, mind and spirit.

In the course of the struggle almost every division in the British Army took its turn among the goalkeepers of Ypres. They marched up by day or by night in an endless succession—Londoners, Scotsmen, the men of Tyneside or the Midlands or the West Country, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders—and they whistled as they marched, some because they had so little conception of what they were going to and others because they knew only too well. As they marched down again they were apt to whistle still, partly for the sake of the “rest” ahead and partly to forget the nameless things which they had left behind. On this return journey they always covered a little less of the road, for keeping goal at Ypres cost our side alone 250,000 men dead during the four years.

There was, indeed, for the vast majority of men, only one road which led to and from Ypres. It ran out westward by the railway station on to the monotonous and sodden levels of this Flanders country ; it ran pretty straight and if produced, after the manner of Euclid, it would have landed, like William the Conqueror, at Pevensey on the Sussex coast. This fact, though stated with rather less topographical accuracy, provided the uppermost thought in the minds of the men who used the road out of Ypres. The trees which should have made a sleepy road pleasant in summer had been reduced to dissolute skeletons by the wear and tear of war, and the marching surface, originally a ribbon of *pavé* between two borders of deepish mud, had been transformed into creditable macadam by steam rollers and the shovels of Labour Battalions, agents equally deliberate but equally sure. The wayside scenery was “nothing to write home about” : with the brave and curious exception of the Goldfisch Chateau, the houses for the first few straight miles had no roofs or other outstanding features. At “Vlam.” there was a kink in this monotonous stretch which, on market day before this history opens, had called attention to a “good pull-up for carmen,” but a cross-road and a railway station, occurring just in

\* The story of the House in the war has been told much more adequately in *Tales of Talbot House*, by Rev. P. B. Clayton (Chatto & Windus, 3s. 6d.). These chapters are but an impression of the place, not a substitute for that book.

front of it, made loitering in war time unhealthy. For the rest, marching men noticed nothing in "Vlam." save the upstanding angle of the church tower (an obelisk to commemorate a former civilisation), a windmill on the left-hand side with a red cross over the roof and many stretchers in the yard, and an immense hop-warehouse opposite. The road for the succeeding miles was just as featureless and as muddy, until it arrived and halted in an enormous paved square, the dirty palm of a deformed hand, whose five fingers of streets spread out vaguely into the surrounding country. This was "Pop," a place so graceless in itself and so void of interest that the pre-war or strictly post-war tourist can hope to imagine neither the halo of light (strictly behind shutters) and laughter which surrounded it, nor yet the swift terror which often descended into it from 1914 to 1918. It was the first collection of houses, to one coming out of Ypres, which still served their proper purpose as homes and not mere hiding-places. It contained the first shops where real buttons and tobacco and souvenir handkerchiefs could still be bought from real shopkeepers. You could still order omelettes from old women who, at some risk of their lives be it duly said, learnt to make them in unprecedented quantity, to speak excellent English, and to grow rich. You could sit in an *estaminet* with so-called beer and very palpable music—above ground. And you could even go to the pictures every evening if so minded.

So much has been said only to show that Poperinghe held a particular and unique position in regard to the Ypres Salient. A freak of geography and the plans of the German General Staff made it what it was to our men—no longer an absurd and squalid village but, in the words of a song then current, something like "a little bit of Heaven." But what now concerns us specially is that in the very heart of it, within sight of the square and facing into the street which held most of the ceaseless traffic of the war in those parts, there stood a house which summed up more completely than anything else the character of Pop. at its best. It had the light and warmth and noise of a super-*estaminet*, and its drinks, if different, were certainly not less comforting. Its music was better, its laughter had more grounds, and its entertainment was far more varied. If the average Belgian *gasthuis* was only rather like a public house in the Mile End Road, the furnishing of this House was, in patches, exactly like everybody's home in England, Scotland or overseas. There was real wallpaper on the walls (and no "recreation hut for the troops," could boast of these homely pink roses), suggestions of a mat on the floor here and there, pictures in frames not even of propaganda-patriotism but normally domestic, curtains which turned not only a dark face to the German night-flier but a cheerful one to the lighted room within, and chairs with arms and real cushions. These simple things, being in such a place and under the imminent shadow of the work which went on ceaselessly so few miles away were valued out of all proportion to their intrinsic beauty. Nor was this all or the chief contribution of the House to the soldier. The relaxation, refreshment and encouragement sought by men who had come out of the line yesterday or were going into it this evening consisted of more than a chair, a cup of tea or even a piano: they

did not live by bread alone. Here the House, being indeed a tall house and not a dug-out under the ground or a wooden hut squatting upon it, was well adapted to meet their need. Its different floors provided exactly the comparative degrees of space and quietness by which a man rises from the satisfaction of his most elementary to that of his most fundamental necessities. He side-stepped out of street—and out of the war as far as might be—on to the ground floor, leaving his mules outside or his pack just inside the front door, and he found the drought in his throat and the hole in his middle immediately confronted by the canteen. Here the primitive pleasure of making a noise with one's boots and one's voice suffered no check. Here also there was a concert room in the garden where the organised use of both was encouraged, and a garden itself where a man might lie at length in summer, digesting his biscuits and even dozing a little. The very notices, which abounded and blossomed to meet every emergency, put the visitor, whatever his rank, at full ease. As he crossed the threshold he was greeted by that ~~as~~ which pointed at him with the legend, not "It's your money we want," but "*Pessimists, emergency exit.*" A grin crept over his face at this word of command, and he was at once disqualified to act on it. With the second notice, printed very plain, his welcome was made complete. It ran: "*If you are accustomed to spit on the carpet at home, please do it here.*" Each man acted according—in spite of there being no visible carpet. The ground floor, then, left no doubt that the House was out to cater for a man's bodily needs.

To climb the stairs, winding and not too well-lighted, was to ascend to the realm of the human mind. The very notice at the half-way turn indicated that much: "*No Amy Robsart stunts on these stairs, please,*" and the next step put a man in the Library ("*This is a Library, not a Dormitory,*" he was warned in print) to discover or re-discover the literary allusion. The food provided ranged from Nat Gould to Bimetallism and Pastoral Theology, and it was all thumb-marked and consumed by somebody sooner or later. On this floor also was the Chaplain's room, of which a word later, for it was the pivot round which the kaleidoscope of the House revolved.

A man might (and often did) however, climb still higher, past a maze of smaller rooms all full of something for somebody, until he came to the foot of a ladder. This was a very proper figure of "the steep ascent of Heaven," or of that ladder which the patriarch and more recently the poet saw "twixt Heaven and Charing Cross"—that prosaic-romantic Charing Cross where perhaps a man had said his real good-bye a week ago when he entrained with his draft, and at which it is quite conceivable that he might be detrained a week hence, into an ambulance. The ladder was short and only intended for the passage of one Belgian to inspect his hops or his lumber in the great loft to which it gave access. As it was, a hundred and fifty men required to make use of it at once, and as an exit for them in a moment of danger it would have been merely preposterous. In point of fact this loft, though at the top of the building which was in itself a storey higher than those on either side of it, was never evacuated when in use on the occasions, none too rare, of shelling or bombing in the town round about. For it had an

air of serenity and safety which compelled all its visitors ; it seemed so surely to be possessed by the Presence which men came to seek in it, that "neither death nor life, things present or things to come" were of account just then. This loft stretched over the whole area of the house, its largest room, in peace time its least-regarded, but now the crown of all the work and thought and happiness and fresh resolve which went on continually beneath it. It was in this upper room that tens of thousands of men found the best gift among many in the House.

This chapel became in process of time not only the most beautiful place in the House but in all Pop. Its very centre was the simplest of its features—the old, worn carpenter's bench transported from an outhouse and found most fitting as an altar for the Carpenter of Nazareth. Every ornament used in it had some honourable history as a spontaneous offering of love or as a memorial of someone much loved. And every week of the war added to its greatest enrichment, as men knelt to receive the Body broken and the Blood poured out, the hallowing of their own offering of body and blood from which they had just returned or to which they were about to go. Thus, without paradox, the foundation stone of the House was built into the top of it ; this was at once its highest and its simplest, its most fundamental and most intelligible secret.

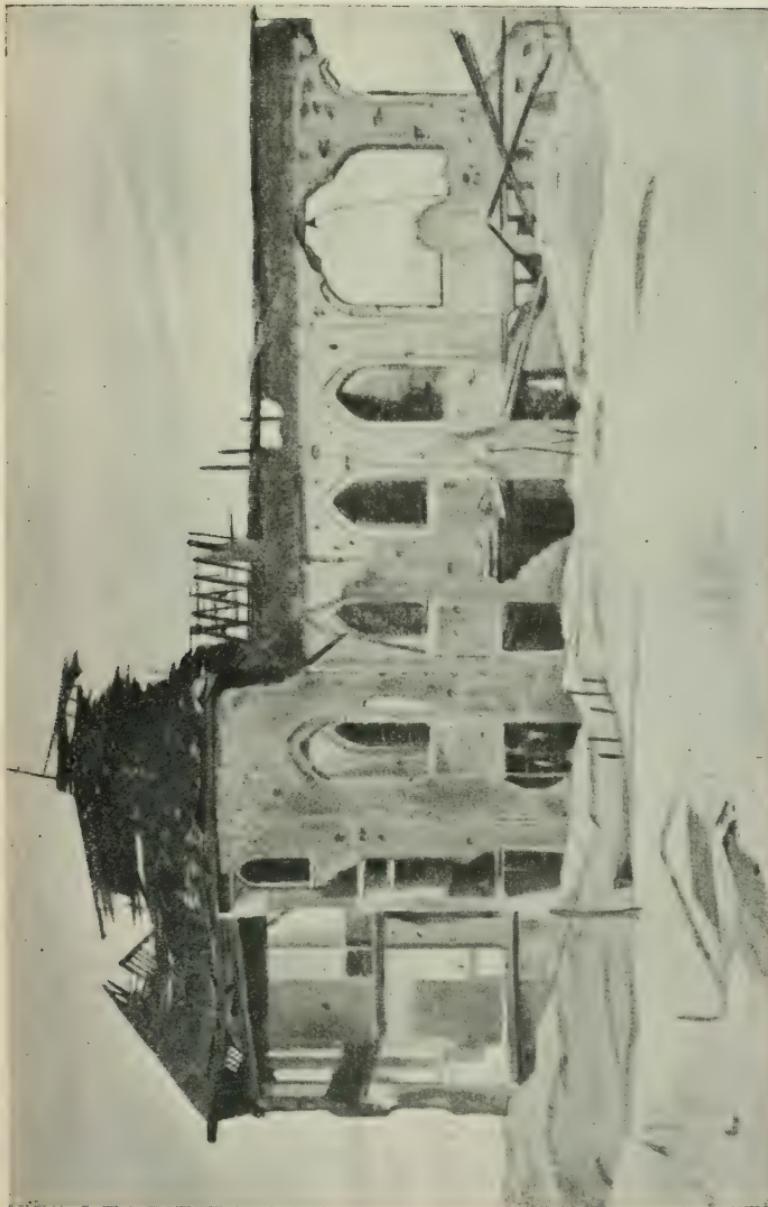
Such was the House in Poperinghe. Its welcome was given as we have suggested to almost every Division in the British Army in turn. Its chapel served a parish co-extensive with the whole Ypres Salient ; some of its parishioners were to be found on every front in the war, and those who survive are now scattered across the world. In the winter of 1917, just two years after its opening (December 15th, 1915), a smaller edition of it captured the slightly shop-soiled lace factory in the Rue de Lille at Ypres. This was a true Daughter House (it would be absurd, under the circumstances, to call it a "Chapel-of-Ease") and carried on the same things in the same spirit—with such limitations as were obvious to all dwellers in that much-tested place. No one save the enemy was to blame for the shortness of its history. But even those six months were worth it beyond all computation.

\* \* \* \* \*

"There was," said *Punch*, "a Talbot House in Poperinghe from 1915 to 1918, and it had an annexe in Little Talbot House in Ypres from the November of 1917 to the dark days before the final counter-stroke in 1918. Both were in the danger zone ; both brought a corner of Heaven into the Hell of men's and officers' lives."

## II.—WHAT'S THE GAME ?

THE British soldier (to the great scandal of the German professional) persisted in regarding war as, for the time being, the National Game, an "International" of unexampled dimensions. He could, therefore, never quite cure himself of the habit of being funny



**Little Toc H., Ypres:** No one save the enemy was to blame for the shortness of its history.  
*(From a drawing made by Will Rothenstein in 1918, now in the Imperial War Museum.)*

about it, and that very often when he was most in earnest or most utterly wearied. Whereas the enemy kicked off with the solemn boast that six weeks would see him win, our side grew accustomed to say that "the last ten years would be the worst." This was, on the surface, a jest, but it contained hidden in it a complete summary of the confident doggedness and shy gallantry of a team which was to suffer reverses but not to know defeat. To the average player on this incalculable field, with its shifty touch line and its puzzling change of rules, the war was undeniably an interesting and exciting game at irregular intervals, infinitely more risky than Rugger on a frosty day, but also, in the long run (and it *was* so long), by far the most boring game in which he had ever taken part. It was unfamiliar and uncongenial, but he picked it up wonderfully soon, and by the time that perfectly respectable British citizens (whether earls from Earl's Court or pork-butchers from Plymouth or bronco busters from the Far West) had learnt to imitate the gait of reptiles and settled down for weeks, months, whole years, to share the homes of rats, it seemed as if war, as a whole, had become too grim and too squalidly business-like to be classed as an adventure. Yet a game the war remained to the end. Sportsmanship, under extreme provocation at times, continued to be prized, and loyalty to a team—a regiment or a platoon—always moved the soldier when speeches about "Civilisation" or "The Empire" left him cold. Those who were actually engaged in winning knew that the "fixture" had not been of their making, and that much thought on the subject would be intolerable. The world, since the war, seems to be gaining an insight into the reckless stupidity of this game as a whole; what it has never fully realised, and seems likely soon to forget, is the patience, confidence, good humour and simplicity of courage shown from first to last by countless men, without names in history, who took part. After all the game was redeemed from being nothing more than the Devil's grandest joke by the spirit of these players, which rose so high and endured so steadily, uncomplaining and selfless except in the least things, and which won at long last.

The job of Talbot House in Poperinghe (which was behind the touch line, though sometimes near being over it) was, as we have seen, to fortify the men who kept goal before Ypres, to receive with every kind of comfort available those who came off the field, and to cheer those who were on their way to it. At every turn it made use of the sporting frame of mind of the soldier, his amazing humour which seemed to rise in inverse ratio to his comfort and which was the cloak of his courage, his craving to take rest by absorbing himself in games of any kind, his constant endeavour to "keep fit" not only in body but in mind and spirit. Even his offers of service to the House, made shyly in his scanty spare time, were to be taken as evidences of that sporting nature which enjoys giving and striving when there is no need. Voluntary labour, from the renewing of pen-nibs by a subaltern in the library to the carving of candlesticks by a corporal for the chapel, helped to make the House what it was—to every man a playground and a possession, not a charity.

But there is one characteristic of British sport on which Talbot

House laid a special hold—its unequalled power of drawing men together. It is obvious enough in peace-time that men, who on normal working days live and move poles apart, are best able to rub minds, as well as shoulders, at Lord's or during a Cup-tie. Whatever be their occupations during the day, the final scores in the



stop-press provide the literature of three-quarters of them, without distinction of class, on the homeward suburban train. This is the national bond, and the war gave fuller proof of it than any other game. Men in Flanders were drawn close together, out of many smaller worlds of their own into one, not only by a common obedience and a common adversity, but by precisely that feeling which converts eleven individuals into one Soccer team. The words *Everyman's Club* on the notice-board which swung over the heads of all who passed in and out of the doors of Talbot House from 1915 to 1918 did not betoken merely a general heartiness, but bore a precise

meaning. It meant that both officers and "Other Ranks" were freemen of every part of this place, and that the list of its committee of management might start with a corps commander but would certainly end with a private.

And that meaning was made almost shockingly clear by a further notice-board on one of the doors on the first floor of the House. This board was of unexplained design--like a wooden rainbow standing on a wooden horizon. The rainbow bore the words *All rank abandon ye who enter here*, and the horizon *Chaplain's Room*.

If you would push open the door of this room, as you were intended to do, you would often be able to read the meaning of the notice at a glance. For seated at a very intimate table there would be an officer, bound in brass and with those strips of red flannel on his collar (whether he were a staff captain or a corps commander did not, in the circumstances, signify) and facing him, their knees almost touching his, two "Other Ranks." Those who know the Army best will appreciate how awkward a situation and a silence was likely to be thus created. But there was a very palpable connecting link in the shape of a man and a teapot, whose comfortable figures were indeed curiously alike. This man was to be recognised as a padre by his heart rather than by his sleeve, for ten to one he was dressed in an old blue blazer with the frayed vestiges of an Oxford college crest on the pocket and a pair of badly creased khaki shorts. The best way to open an Englishmen's mouth, it has been said, is to put something into it, and so the tea and cake played a real part in breaking the first embarrassment of silence. Further, tea and cake shared between these four under the peculiar conditions of the time and place, partook of the nature of a simple sacrament. For *here* at least, as the notice had said, all rank was abandoned; the crossed swords and the worsted chevron alike had been, so to speak, left outside on the doormat. Common ground of interest was certain soon to emerge. It happened, maybe, that the general and the lance-corporal both hailed from Bradford and loved it all the more from not having seen it for six months, and that the gunner had a tale to tell of Australia. Moreover, the padre had something—"light-hearted or high-minded"—to say on most subjects. These were just four men, bound in a common cause, who had not realised until this afternoon just how closely their real selves belonged to one another.

Now such an incident, the very simplicity of which was its spice and charm, was a commonplace beneath the roof of Talbot House, but might seem at superficial sight to run counter to the whole theory of an army in the field. The rainbow notice was, in point of fact, misinterpreted on one or two occasions by men in authority as being "subversive of discipline." If it came down in obedience to the letter of orders, it always went up again, out of conviction that it did not violate the underlying spirit of all ranks. Although it would appear that the War Office has a special department whose sole purpose is to tie men up in little parcels with different coloured string and to see that the string does not come undone, behind each man's colour and insignia there remains the man himself. Having admitted—what is perfectly obvious—that in so serious a game as war a team of a million or even of ten men cannot be allowed merely

to mob about the field, we are brought back to the human character, the soul of individuals, every time, as the secret of success or failure of the whole. Clothed with the little brief authority of two pips on the shoulder or a crown on the forearm, some men did no doubt seek to rule during the war, but these could never become the real leaders; in crisis a follower looks for more than that. But when young Captain Smith, who played cricket for Marlborough only last summer-term, "went West" one dark night on Passchendaele, a hundred Welsh miners, accustomed to his quaint accent in "Form Fours," said little but deeply mourned a friend. And when plain Colonel Jones was caught in a very tight corner one May morning in '18, his batman ("never likely to prove an efficient soldier") did not stop to think whether it was worth while to stake his own life against an impossible chance; he gave it without any thought at all. It must be true that nothing short of the spirit of such understandings between man and man would have availed for the final victory. They were the unspectacular but the only real glories of war. And so—on a lesser scale only because the proof at the moment was less—the men round the tea-table at Talbot House became aware of each other's worth. Next day, the Australian gunner chanced to encounter the "Imperial" brass hat in the Rue de Boeschepé, and saluted him—perhaps after a manner not inborn in Australian gunners. The signs of recognition under their official masks might have escaped the notice of any third party, but neither of them had forgotten the cake which they had eaten together, slice for slice, nor some of the words that had passed between them the day before. Thus did Talbot House do nothing to subvert that essential military discipline which in the last resort is based upon fear, but it cemented that higher discipline between men which often needs emergency to make it plain, and which is rooted in love. Normal circumstances outside often went against it, but within the walls of "Every-man's Club" it happened normally. But not by mere accident—for this was the game of Talbot House.

### III.—DARKNESS AND DELIVERANCE.

IN Poperinghe, as in every other place on the Western Front, the darkest hours were before the dawn. Christmas Day, 1917, might be taken as an arbitrary date for the gloomiest day of the war. The road from Pop. to Ypres was wrapped in drifting fog, not really dense but dirty, grey and icy cold. This physical condition, a sort of meaningless inaction of the elements as compared to the bracing violence of a storm, found its counterpart in the mood of our men. The summer campaign had been reduced time and again by bad weather to disappointment, and the autumn had been filled by the unremitting agony of Passchendaele with its bitter losses and, as it seemed to those engaged, its altogether trifling gains. For the first time, on any general scale, the faith of the men wavered, the mind of the staff appeared to hesitate, and in the heart of the army a more insidious enemy seemed to be taking the field

than any it had yet faced. *Morale*, sometimes preached *ad nauseam* to troops when they least needed such encouragement, touched its lowest mark—though only, as the world was to witness soon after, to leap again to its highest. Men who during the years past had cursed cheerfully at every fate now began to murmur in secret. Admitted grievances over rations, leave and pay, hitherto openly groused about, now took on a turn of intense bitterness. There was some increase in desertion—the fighting man's most tragic lapse—and bad feeling between officers and men was exaggerated into a dangerous threat of disunion. The interminable strain of the war could be borne by men while they were moving beyond their strength towards impossible objectives, but it brought them nearest to breaking point when they had to sit still. What was it all for? To what purpose did so many of our best friends lie up there, drowned in that damnable mud? When would it end, and, after all, how? And this was Christmas Day—back yonder there should be holiday, a cosy room, the kids, the angels' song, the Birthday of Peace. . . .

Before this situation, without serious precedent, the Authorities, who work mysteriously somewhere in the background of the grand game, were frankly perplexed. They made an honest effort to restore the failing spirit, and they chose the method of still more concert parties, cinemas, football matches—"anything to stop the men thinking too much." Among the diversions to hand, Talbot House and every institution which purveyed buns, billiards, music and general jollity were clearly to be reckoned. There was need now for the House to redouble its effort if it was to shake off the heaviness of spirit which threatened to reign there as everywhere else, and to apply itself with a fresh mind to a new situation. It must be said here, without courtesy to those same Authorities who had backed the House so splendidly from the start, that its method did not in all things follow the official lead. Beyond the cheerfulness of entertainment in many guises, it sought quietly and steadily to make men think, to bring their grievances into the open of an informal meeting at which officers of true and kindly wisdom were present. This was made known to the Authorities and allowed by them to succeed. And perhaps those four thousand motley books in the library, and the quiet Celebrations or loud-voiced evening services in the chapel lifted heavier loads from men who used them then than at any other time. Even the winter of our greatest discontent came to an end, and the spring drew on.

And then the storm burst. There is no call to attempt the indescribable here, for it has been so often attempted. It will never be forgotten by the survivors; on their heads in those days the ends of the world did indeed seem to have come, and there will always be awe mixed with their thanksgiving. "The March Show" is their common curt phrase, the whole meaning of which strangers can never guess. As far as the Ypres Salient was concerned it was an April-May "show"; March, 1918, passed in an ominous stillness in which all eyes were turned towards the south. It cannot be said that Pop. itself was a quiet or healthy residence by the end of the month, for the enemy began his preparation for attack by a fortnight's systematic shelling of the

SOUVENIR  
DE  
POPEMINGE  
1917.



"Fed up."

(From a drawing by Bert Thomas, first published in the "Toc H. Annual," 1921.)

devoted town and the areas behind it. More civilians than usual were killed and a great many evacuated. Shops put up their shutters, only to have their fronts blown away. Easter Day found Talbot House still open, but its congregations woefully reduced in numbers. By the middle of April only its lower parts were in use and those skilfully sandbagged—with sacks of official "Propaganda" which a kindly department at home had provided for another but not better use. The House indeed was officially closed several times, but always with a crack for those who knew the ways of that big, white, double door which since 1915 had forgotten how to shut. It was not until nearly the end of May, 1918, that orders no longer to be disregarded brought the close of a long chapter in Everyman's Club. Kemmel Hill had fallen (and those who stand upon it to-day can still guess what that implied to the men in the Salient), the enemy was before the walls of Ypres, though never over them, and lines of trenches were being dug for a retiring army right back to the sea. But the Second Army did not retire on Boulogne. The barometer of its spirit, after a flicker here and there, rose and remained at Set Fair. The last stage, and perhaps the most wonderful of all in the great game, was being played.

By the summer, as everyone knows, the tide had turned and was flowing back over a desolate country which we had won and held and lost and won again at so unspeakable a price. The darkness rolled back and disclosed the battered little town of Pop. Shopkeepers came again to rebuild their roofs and re-stock their shelves. Talbot House (after a dim period of exile in "Dingley Dell" which is not on any map) actually reopened its doors, but its customers and its worshippers were gone, its work for the time of War accomplished. To follow the army was at first sight tempting, but the arrival (without means of transport) of the mountain of impedimenta which embodied the House in such a place as Courtrai would have been the signal for the army to move on to Brussels, as surely as carrying an umbrella induces a sunny day.

Poperinghe to-day is an excessively plain little Belgian town, with nothing to offer the curious save memories of a war of which nearly all outward marks have vanished. The wall-paper inside a certain tall house in the main street is varied by a small board, bearing these words—

*"NISI DOMINUS FRUSTRA—During the Great War this House was famous throughout the British Armies. It was called Talbot House in memory of Lieut. Gilbert Talbot of the Rifle Brigade, who died in action near Sanctuary Wood in July, 1915. The house was rented from its owner, M. Coevoet-Camerlynck, in December, 1915, and remained through three stormy years the play-room of the troops who held the Salient. Providentially immune through all bombardments, Talbot House closed, its work accomplished, in December, 1918. In the Chapel constructed by the Queen's Westminster Rifles, in the large Upper Room, many thousands of officers and men received the Blessed Sacrament. P. B. Clayton, Garrison Chaplain."*

## IV.—IS IT PEACE ?

THE Armistice was a fact, and mankind learnt again to live above ground without fear. The process of demobilisation began, and proved to most men to be unexpectedly tedious. Talbot House, to all outward appearance, had already been "demobbed" as one of those many appendages to the military machine which are improvised during an emergency and lose their meaning as soon as it is met. But this was not so. The emergency was not over; and Talbot House still maintained, like other war units, a respectable *cadre* round which, if need were proved, a great body could again be mobilised.

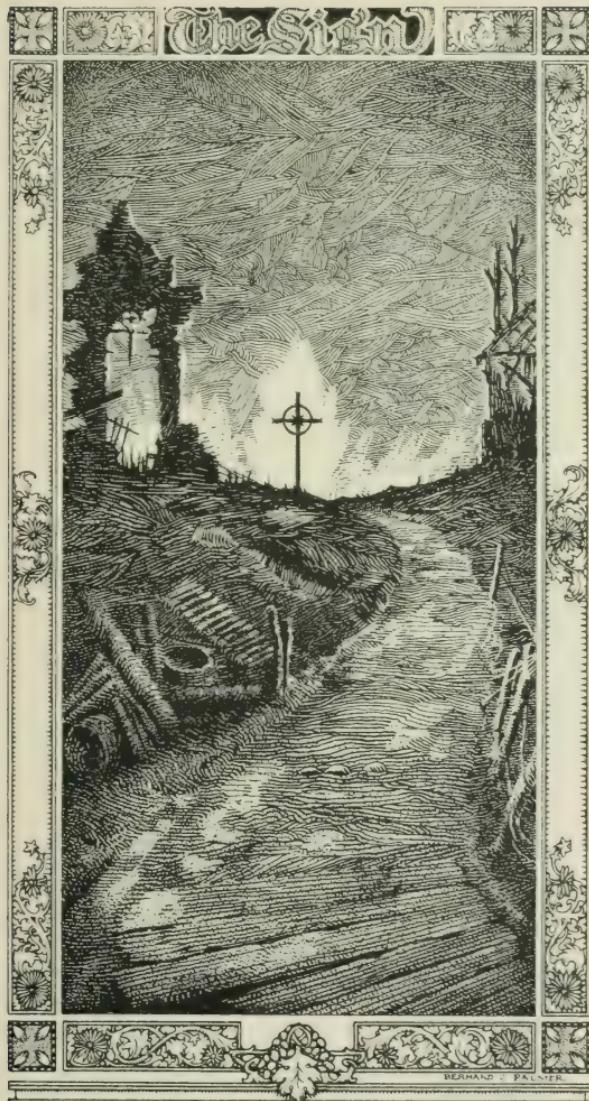
The emergency remained, and, if some of the forms it took were new, the chief of them were age-old. Seen with a longer view than most men fresh from the conflict "over there" could be asked to take, the Great War was but one particularly hot engagement in a greater campaign. Ignorance of each other between men, and between families, and between those larger families called nations, has lain at the root of all tragedies in history. It is the merest truism, through still unlearnt, that ignorance breeds misunderstanding, and that the subsequent stages are mistrust and conflict. Ignorance, whether wilful or careless, at last appears in the light of a sin, and in the end the wages of sin is Death. In the war the most "enlightened" nations of the earth had received these tenfold wages of their ignorance and misunderstanding of each other. They were paid in the coin of dear lives of ordinary men, Tom, Dick and Harry, whose intimate places at home can never be filled, though other men play substitute for them in the work of every day. The blindness of the world which knew not what it did had called for their destruction, as many years ago it had sacrificed a Man on a green hill. Their suffering, not by mere analogy but in its very nature, partook of His. For the chastisement of our peace was upon them; they died in order that we might live. Heavy indeed was the burden laid upon these ordinary men, who were in the main neither saints nor heroes, but who were made perfect in suffering. If the ancient Christian Church sometimes adopted a beautiful figure of our Saviour upon the Cross, no longer naked and dying, but robed, crowned, radiant, risen, triumphant, we should set these our friends upright, alive, face forward for some better task, upon the steps at its foot. But the right is ours only on a condition—that we consent to defeat the ignorance between men and nations which had sent them to their deaths. The "war to end war" had been won by men like these, but the question at the root still awaits answer—have men turned their faces from mistrust towards love of each other? If the answer cannot be Yes, then all history will have to admit the unthinkable—that these died in vain.

Meanwhile, one part of the business being done, the survivors came home to the tune of certain catch-phrases of the time. They looked forward to a "month's real holiday" after this "war to end war." They were to return to "a land fit for heroes to live in," and to remake civilian careers in a new atmosphere into which

"the brotherhood of the trenches" had been automatically transferred. It is difficult to know whether many men believed these things, or whether it was merely many newspapers which said them. A large number of those returning slipped into the old niche of pre-war work but found it less satisfying than formerly. To hosts of other soldiers, once more turned citizens, it became clear that Peace had indeed broken out with terrible severity. A great lassitude, which excused itself—with some reason—as "war-weariness," seemed to have paralysed most people, including themselves. That good-natured but formless monster, Public Opinion, shouted and made speeches over them for a time, and then tended to leave them alone because it did not know what to do next. Those who had given their eyesight were gathered into St. Dunstan's, and what bodies remained to the hopelessly disabled were hidden away in hospitals, where 16,000 of them still lie. On the surface a passionate pursuit of everything frivolous and expensive seemed to rule half the world, but just beneath the surface there was always that immeasurable bereavement, especially in the hearts of women, which time might soften but could never heal, and over the unemployed ex-service man a growing shadow of privation at the moment and doubt for the morrow. Words cannot describe these things to men and women who have never felt them, and to those who have, words are not wanted. During these last three years it has often needed a brave man to be grateful for the "blessings of Peace"—but many men have been brave enough. For others—in proportion so very few—the strain was beyond patience. They saw every more fortunate person as a profiteer at their expense and red revolution as the only escape, a vision of two irreconcilable worlds (in the words of a very modern prophet) "one preaching a Class War, and the other vigorously practising it." And after all, "*Is it Peace?*"? Or has the engagement of 1914–18 made all of us more conscious than we used to be of an age-old warfare which is not yet ended, a campaign which has laid down the temporary weapons of bomb and bayonet only to take up the traditional ones, less honest and not less truly cruel, of indifference and mistrust between men in the relations of every day?

In the doubt and confusion of all this peace-making, even as it was manifested in one small corner of one city of one country, the *cadre* of Talbot House might well appear an absurd and infinitesimal factor of small worth. But it was alive in the persons of one man or of half a dozen, and round it (as it believed) the body was waiting to be re-mobilised, whether as one or as half a dozen thousand. Was this still the moment of emergency? And if so, should the order to mobilise be sent out? And would it be obeyed?

The outward conditions of Poperinghe during the war and of London after it were admittedly different. Yet the underlying necessities of those who had exchanged the one for the other had not so completely changed, and the tasks which would confront a fresh-embodied Talbot House were, strictly considered, none other than those which have filled our first three chapters. Briefly, they would be (1) to provide refreshment of body, mind and spirit, "100 per cent. cheerfulness," for those who went daily in and out



**The blindness of the world had called for their destruction.**

(From a drawing by Bernard Palmer made on the Zonnebeke Road in 1917, and given to Toc H.)

of the battle of post-war existence, (2) to make these sportsmen into a *team* by bringing them (all class-distinction abandoned) to know and love each other, and (3) to remove the causes of disheartenment in men and bitterness between them by helping them to think and discuss and look ahead, ready (as in 1918 they had proved themselves) to make a "great Push" for the service and salvation of the whole community. Here, it was confidently believed, was a tonic for the lassitude, a beacon for the hopelessness, a more excellent way for the revolt of some sorely-tried individuals; and for all men, without distinction of wealth and work and schooling, a limitless field of adventure.

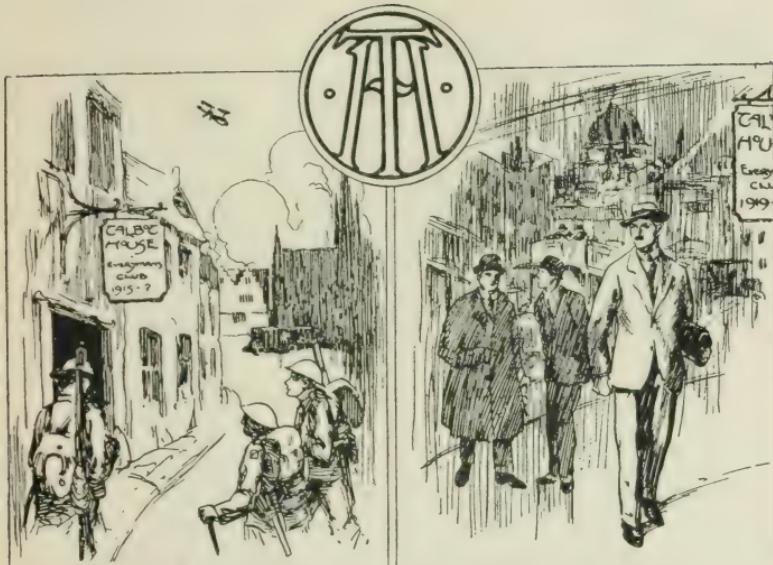
This was the dream (as really common-sense people would have accounted it) of Talbot House, but dreams, under certain conditions, may come true. So the call to mobilise was sent out, and it was answered, because the conditions needed were present all the time. These were simple, if very arduous—faith in those who called, and faithfulness in those who responded.

#### V.—VADE MECUM.

THIS chapter is to be merely a record of beginnings which have attained certain definite results but as yet no halting-places, for we believe that the practice of counting one's laurels is as nothing to "the glory of going on." It is as well to start fair with a change of name. *Talbot House*, which is a sensible-sounding peace-time name, gave place to *Toc H.*, which would be familiar enough to men in fighting a war, but certainly intriguing to peaceable citizens. The reason for this paradox has already been given,\* and after all it may be no disadvantage for a strange institution to bear a strange title.

The new *Toc H.* did not immediately rise from the warm ashes of the old. "For the year after the Armstice, Talbot House made no move towards re-establishment. For this delay there were two good reasons. First, that part of the harvest from the old House which formed the spear-head of the Service Candidates' School had to be gathered and garnered in the old prison at Knutsford, in preparation for their further University training. Secondly, a new beginning, based solely upon backward-looking sentiment, was unlikely to be of any permanent value. It was during this year that clubs without number flourished and faded, having no root; but (while the lapse of time thus self-imposed upon 'Toc H.' made the beginning when it came a far more uphill thing) the interregnum of twelve months gave an opportunity of readjusting the proposed methods of work to the civilian conditions which it was to penetrate.

\* The origins of the names "Talbot House" and "Toc H." are explained in a note on page 6, we hope intelligibly; if not we give it up, for ceaseless practice in explaining them can produce nothing better:



The correspondence concerning the task ahead grew as the year grew older, and on November 15th, 1919, the inaugural meeting was held in a brave little room at 40, Great Smith Street, when the nucleus of the Executive Committee was appointed.

"Over the turn of the year this nucleus added to its numbers from among other friends of the old House, and supporters of the new, and in February, 1920, a four-roomed flat of the kind that is euphemistically described as "furnished" became the first home of Talbot House in England. These premises, if adequate to the name, were situated at the top of an old house at 36, Red Lion Square, behind the Fire Station in Southampton Row, and defective as they were in other directions, were hallowed by the coincidence that hence Arthur Stanton started his work upon the Postmen's League.

"In this new beginning, Pettifer\* and the Padre kept open house so far as the office premises below permitted; and, in the absence of an effective electric bell, a long string with a luggage label attached, depended from the upper window. Here the first Hostellers were an ex-R.A.F. Captain, who had made a forced landing in a Government office, and a strolling player, then reopening what now promises to be a formidable Shakespearean career. From tea-time onwards the sitting-room was full, and the kitchen in constant requisition, as were also the sofa and the easy chairs at an advanced hour. After a month or so, it was plainly an alternative between expansion or a summons from the health authorities of Holborn."†

\* Late Pte. A. Pettifer, M.M., No. 237, the Buffs, major-domo of the old House, and now of Mark I.

† *Vide First Annual Report, 1921.*

Expansion was the course indicated, and now it was clear that if the fundamental needs of men and the essential spirit of the movement were to be the same in peace as in war, the means by which these things expressed themselves must be conformable to civilian life. Some sort of bricks and mortar there must be, some visible focus, some place of meeting. It was decided, more by circumstances than by any committee, that Toc H. could be to certain men not only a club but a billet, yet more than a billet—a home. And to the rest of the world it should continue to be Every-man's Club—yet not quite every-man's (for that is too vague to be permanently strong) but the club of its enrolled members. The membership, however, was always to represent every-man, for it must embrace "soldier, sailor" (both, in most cases, ex-), "tinker, tailor, gentleman" (which is redundant because it may cover all the others), "apothecary, ploughboy"—and even, to complete the old jingle, "thief" (if to get into a police court by a blunder and out of it into the arms of Toc H. is to earn that title).

First, then, a brief history of bricks and mortar of the post-war movement. An appeal for funds was issued in March, 1920, and the immediate response to it enabled the "office" and its motley human attachments to exchange the little, old flat for a real house in Kensington, an historic oasis in the city for a stucco lodge in the wilderness of the West. 8, Queen's Gate Place, held the first body of hostellers for two months, by which time it had outgrown its clothes. Under cover of darkness a "flit" was carried out—by means of the traditional barrow of Hoxton rather than the pan-teachicon of Mayfair. The vast corner house, No. 23, in Queen's Gate Gardens, was occupied without casualties. Troops dug themselves in at once, and set to work to entertain an outraged neighbourhood with the nightly songs of Zion. *Toc H. Mark I* was founded.

Many of the "properties" recalled the white house in Poperinghe to old friends; the identical notices, a little dog-eared with affectionate use, were run up at the right corners, and only the invitation to use the carpet as a spittoon was hung a little too high—out of regard for lady visitors. Two of its features, however, in particular did more than awaken memory; they made it the old House. The first of these was Private Pettifer, affectionately known to all and sundry (even to those who appear as Generals in the Army List) as "The General." He had served the House in Pop. from first to last and been almost the only man in the B.E.F. who could control its Padre. He is now supported below stairs by Mrs. P. and family, and he rules the domestic economy of the House from top to bottom with a sure touch and a heart of gold. The stranger who rings up Mark I on the telephone is likely to get his first marching orders from "the General" in person. The second special feature is the chapel, a little place opening quite naturally out of the big Club Room.\* It is far smaller than the Upper Room at Poperinghe, but it contains all the furnishings which made that so beautiful. The curtains and canopy of the altar are those which Bishop Talbot

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\* The Club room is a memorial gift from the Green Howards (Yorkshire Regt.).

had sent out to Flanders from his former private chapel. The altar itself is still the old carpenter's bench, with the sawdust of its last workman in the cracks, and the frontal which hides it from view the thank-offering of a Guards' officer. The chalice which stands upon it once a week is that which touched the lips of many thousands of men, some for the first and some for the last time. The inscription upon it to-day reads: *He was seen by above five thousand brethren: but some are fallen asleep.* The very perfect oak carving of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, which forms a reredos, was saved from ruin at Ypres, and purchased with the glad permission of its Belgian owner. More than memory of the past is thus enshrined in Mark I; the spirit of the living present is shown forth daily in the General's cheerful deed and utterance and in the silence of the Upper Room.

*Mark II* was born in September of the same year, 1920, and is a generous contribution from the Duke of Westminster. St. George's Square, from the house-agents' point of view, has "come down" a little since the stateliest Victorian days, but its great charm is untouched. 123 (a really sensible number to memorise) stands at the corner furthest from Victoria Station, with its front door looking to the splendid plane-trees of the Square, and its flank commanding the River of London. It is uncertain whether its flank is not in reality its front, for here hangs the identical board from Poperinghe inscribed *Talbot House, 1915—? Every-man's Club*, and beneath it a large tablet, unveiled in 1921 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, as a president of Toc H., which describes the object of the house, and ends *A Dieu foy, aux amis foyer.* On this side also is an entrance labelled *Traitors Gate*; naturally, it never needs to be opened, and serves to puzzle the passer by and to provide railings on which the children of Pimlico swing with their skipping ropes. The ground floor is given over to the "*Ypres Chapel*," in which the furniture of the cellar shrine of Little Talbot House fulfils its old uses, and to the headquarters offices of the whole movement. Here is one door labelled *Orderly Room*, another *Registrar*, and a third *The Poor Old Padre*, while a fairly cosy rabbit-warren in the basement below houses other indispensable human wheels of the engine. Upstairs the House resembles Mark I—if perhaps a little less so. A beautiful Club Room,\* looking out on Square and River, contains among other treasures, Frank Bramley's *Hopeless Dawn*—not "scrounged" from the neighbouring Tate Gallery, but a replica by the artist. For the rest there is a billiard-room, half-size, with a hole in the wall which o' nights yawns into a canteen, a mess-room with its attendant cook-house, and three floors of bedrooms, single, double or treble, according to size. In the case of most bedrooms the visitor will remark a name painted above the door (e.g., Basil's Room, the Trench Room, etc.), and the same name, together with a regimental crest and a brief inscription on a metal plate, within the room itself. A memorial to one who did not live to come home from the war so simple and perpetual as a little room, where two of his successors make their home and learn, maybe, to carry on the

\* A memorial gift from the Rifle Brigade.



**Mark I.—The Chapel.**



**Mark II.—And Family.**

everyday work that would have been his, appeals to the imaginations of many—both to those who give and those who receive its cheerful comfort. It may very well be that such a token fits the eager spirit of the men who died far more nearly than any graven stone.† With this the catalogue of *Mark II* (not forgetting to reckon also a yard with a covered gymnasium and a roof overlooking all London) is complete. It is admittedly a still-life picture on this page, and therefore grotesquely inadequate.

*Mark III* is, as yet, the youngest child of Toc H. It stands on the "south side" in York Road, one of the noisiest in London, for it catches all the engine whistles and half the taxis of Waterloo Station. The house itself is more modest than its two sisters, for it was merely intended by its architect as a vicarage in the days when vicars of poor parishes occupied fourteen bedrooms. "It is confronted" (writes our Special Correspondent) "by a disused chapel-of-ease which was consecrated during the war to the strange deity known as Wrigley's Chewing-Gum, whose worshippers (and they are many) are constrained to silence during the performance of their votive rites. Wrigley's are shortly moving back to their larger premises which were of course commandeered by 'Dora.' At a later stage we hope to lend a hand with a big boys' club yonder; and already the nucleus of this great adventure inhabits the basement of *Mark III* on several nights a week. *Mark III* has many irons in the fire, and yet lets none of them grow cold. It has a close liaison with the Bermondsey Clubs,‡ with the 'Old Vic,'§ with St. John's Scouts, with a Monday Choral Society. It is the home of the Toc H. Drama League; it swims; it boxes; it writes books; it runs; it sometimes reads. Immaculate diners out drop in there, as also do those who seldom dine at all. It is a bold thing to say that anything is unique in London; but *Mark III* is at least ineffably unusual."

So much for the conscientious Baedeker part of the business, from which we have omitted many stars against special features as being invidious. It is now necessary to convey, if may be, some impression of the progress not only within the walls of the three first-founded houses, but in the movement as a whole. For no mistake could be more disastrous or less forgivable, say, by our supporters in Glasgow or Canada, than to suppose that Toc H. exists to run three lodging-houses in London. To begin with, *Mark IV* bids fair to take over a fine house in Manchester before

† See Appendix, p. 45.

‡ The boys' and men's clubs of the Oxford and Bermondsey Club. At the time these pages go to press a fresh link is likely to be forged between Toc H. and the O. & B.C., long friends, in that Toc H. may take over the old headquarters of the O. & B.C. at 175, Long Lane, Bermondsey, for a small hostel in which eight or ten men from Oxford, Bermondsey and elsewhere will live together on a simple scale and open yet another chapter in that adventure of service to this crowded district of London which began—on the simplest scale imaginable—twenty-five years ago.

§ The Victoria Palace, an old music hall in the Waterloo Road, which the faith and genius of Miss Baylis has converted into "the home of Shakespeare and Grand Opera in English."

this page reaches any readers it may have—for a true movement moves without waiting for ink to dry. And Leicester is coming into our picture of model housing, and there is a stir in Newcastle, and a hope in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and more than a whisper in Bristol.

Furthermore, Toc H. is in being and in growing here and there all over the country, in places where there is no building but only the cheerful faces and services of its members to proclaim it. At the moment of writing there are some seventy of these local branches in existence, not to mention outposts in such remote places as Aberdeen or the Upper Nile, which would be lonelier still but for the knowledge of the brotherhood to which they belong. The stronger branches, whether they count eight or eighty members, are apt already to meet together once a fortnight for the purpose of hearing someone who is alleged to know his subject, and of pulling him to pieces, if they can, in the friendliest manner afterwards. Most of these gatherings (mindful of the talisman of tea and cake at Poperinghe) begin by drinking tea together, or even by consuming fish and chips in the nearest British equivalent (barring the automatic organ and the omelettes) of an *estaminet*. Most members wear an engraved Toc H. identity disk (which looks wonderfully like gold) on their wrist, and receive a monthly *News Sheet*, which is at present the journal with the largest cyclostyled circulation in Europe and in parts the most capriciously illegible on record. By simple outward means such as these 7,000 men proclaim their oneness as members of Toc H. It is noteworthy that in return for their subscription—modest, but not for all of them easy in these hard times to come by—the great majority receive little if any material advantages. If a man joins for some visible gain he makes a poor bargain, but if for what he can give of himself his reward may be greater than Mr. Worldly Wiseman will ever understand. “A spirit from within nourishes.”

## VI.—TO CONQUER HATE.

EVERYTHING in creation that grows must possess some inmost spring of life, and increases (so at least all men of hope and faith believe) for some end. Toc H. can be seen growing apace: what is the secret of its life and what its ultimate purpose?

It is natural that onlookers should assume Toc H. to be one of the ex-Service organisations. It is so—in the sense only that it was born out of the Great War, counted none but serving men as its Foundation Members, and must never cease to keep proud and glad remembrance of those among its fellowship who did not live to come home. But war memories are not the whole secret of its life, nor the preservation of them its ultimate purpose. The ex-service bond is very strong, but cannot be perpetual. A general of the American Civil War is quoted as saying that the limit of a

nation's gratitude to the men of its victorious army is six months. In the mind of our own country the Boer War has already shrunk almost out of sight, and the record of the Veterans of the Crimea is at the very last rays of sunset. Forty years on and the members of any purely ex-service organisation of the Great War will be old men, with ranks every year reduced, who meet under an almost legendary tie of reminiscence, and whose secrets will earn the respect but not the understanding of middle-aged men of the time. Toc H., therefore, has already been at pains to recruit from the younger generation which was still at school or beginning its apprenticeship or engaged on its first wage-earning job, when the Foundation Members were helping to hold the Ypres Salient. For this is not to remain only a fraternity of the past prolonged, as far as nature will allow, into the present, but a movement of brothers, facing continually into the future. The secret of Toc H. is *Fellowship*—but not a fellowship content to dwindle and grow old as it sits round a sinking fire, but kept young with a renewed eagerness and resolve by those who fall in, faster we hope than the tired men fall out, as it marches along the road.

And to what end? The most abrupt and true answer is to be given in three words which happen to contain an anagram of the queer name of Toc H.—“*TO Conquer Hate*.” Reference has already been made to the fatal chain which so often binds the nations of the world, the castes within the nations and the individual good fellows who go to make up these and every human society. To one man's elementary Ignorance of another is linked Misunderstanding, to Misunderstanding Mistrust (which is another name for Fear), and Fear leads on to Hate, Hate to Conflict, and Conflict ends, on a greater or lesser scale, in Death of the conscience if not of the body. The aim of Toc H. is to strike at the furthest link in this chain of human disaster, for, the chain once broken, the prisoner is free to praise God instead of wasting breath in cursing his brother, and to serve the world with gladness in place of clumsily destroying it. Fear and Hate are twin children of darkness and nothing—to use a familiar form of words—but “perfect Love casteth out Fear.”

If the furthest link in the chain which so hampers men's march is ignorance one of another, the means employed by Toc H. to break it are almost childishly simple. For they are just the natural ways of learning to love, step by step and almost without knowing it, as a child learns to walk every day a little more firmly on its two feet. In three houses in London already three families of men, seventy-two in all, are living together. They never really met each other before—mainly because an Oxford graduate, who is destined to be a doctor, has so few chances in the ordinary way of sharing a bedroom with an Elementary ex-scholar who is a motor-mechanic, or even of playing in the same cricket team, much less of embarking with him on a common venture of service. You will prefer not to share a bedroom with any man unless you know him a little, and you cannot do it for long without getting to know all the ins and outs of his character rather well. Even if you only meet your “opposite number” for tea and a smoke once a fortnight you will at least become his acquaintance, if not his friend. Thus,

even within the present borders of Toc H., lonely men—whether down on their luck in temporal ways or not—have found companions, and men with prejudiced minds (that is, every one of us, more or less) have seen some new light. The first step, the inmost secret, is to find Fellowship by understanding, and every step after is to express fellowship in service. Toc H., then, exists not only for the mutual “information” of its members, but also for their “necessary action.”

Now, if Christian and Faithful (as in the old tale so often referred to and so seldom read in our times) are setting out thus light-heartedly “to conquer hate” and to find the Celestial City, they will certainly be met by many of the old questioners, doubters and tempters, saying much the same old things, even if their phrases are new since the time of the tinker of Bedford. *Mr. Good-Will* may meet the Toc H. pilgrim with his “an open door is set before thee, and no man can shut it,” but those “sturdy rogues,” *Faint-heart* and *Mistrust* will also be in the way. And there is *Timorous* (“the further he went the more danger he met with”) and *Mr. Talkative*, “who talks but does not.” And there will certainly be *Young Ignorance* (“I take my pleasure in walking alone”) and *Mr. Blind-man* who says “I see clearly that this man is a heretic,” and *Mr. High-mind* (who has changed his name to *Snob*) who calls the pilgrim “a sorry scrub.” *Mr. Money-Love* also is not unknown in our time, with a parrot-cry about “the almighty dollar”—a dreary fellow when he has the chance of being such a jolly one. Their Job’s comfort is likely to be applied pretty freely to so young and ambitious a pilgrimage as that of Toc H.

First of all, can the plan succeed? (This from *Mr. Faint-heart*) The effort is still being made on so infinitely small a scale in comparison to the population of the world or even of one city: will it ever “cut any ice”? In reply we can only say that we have been told that some seeds become forest trees, and that we must be counted among the witnesses that twelve men—“not many mighty”—came forward years ago from villages in the Near East and turned the world upside down. (For our own benefit we shall have to remind ourselves continually that only the right seeds ever produce trees, and that the twelve men only succeeded on very hard conditions which often made their venture look more like failure than success.)

Next comes *Mr. Worldly Wiseman*, in attitude a little superior, with his “knowledge of the world,” to us dreamers. His knowledge is undeniable, but it is admittedly of his particular part of the world in the year 1922—a world divided (whether by relative incomes or accidents of “social standing”) into perfectly definite classes of people by a series of water-tight bulkheads: if these were once left carelessly open or were to be forcibly broken, the whole fair ship of civilised life, with all its decencies and comforts, would (so he says) flood and founder. Toc H., behind its pleasant and harmless exterior as a Club of Queer Trades, seems to be designed as a tool for forcing the bulkheads between classes—“Are you sure it is wise?” says this comfortable critic. “What we need in the country is discipline. People must be taught their places: a lot

of these fellows nowadays are idle and out of hand. Be very careful how you encourage the working classes. Look at Russia !” To him we have such a lot to say, but he has to hurry off, quite friendly and quite unconvinced, to the City, for “ time is money.”

There comes yet another who does not figure in Bunyan’s portrait gallery—though very likely he has this in common with one of the more shady characters that “ he is become a gentleman of good quality, yet his great-grandfather was but a waterman, rowing one way and looking another.” He is an Englishman by birth and bringing-up : he is certainly neither Scotch nor Canadian. He wants to know whether this Toc H. fellowship among such different men is really and truly “ natural ” : for his part he has a dislike of “ bad form ” and he is not sure whether the plan of Toc H. is one of the things in life which “ simply isn’t done ” by men of his kind. He may, however, be open to conviction, but mere argument is not the right answer to his question. The proof of the pudding can be eaten—and very welcome—by him at the over-crowded supper table of any House or Branch on a “ guest night.” There he may happen to find himself seated between a barrister (ex-colonel) and a plumber (ex-private), and his chair will be on the level—not near the top of a steep slope separating these two. If he begins to talk up to one side and down to the other, he will find himself an obstacle rather than a connecting link in conversation. Being a man of good manners and fine perceptions he will, doubtless, soon appreciate that his two neighbours, if temporarily his hosts, are so by virtue of their permanent friendship with one another. So he begins to understand, and soon, it may happen, he will begin to serve as well as any other in our ranks. For he is a really sound fellow, if rather painstakingly short-sighted.

Many another figure will come to meet us, puzzled or doubting or actually hostile, but we can face each one. The first generation of Toc H. has proved the worth of fellowship in the ordeal by fire : as for the younger members, spared that hard school, they will find unspeakably much to encourage them in the last testament of one of those who died in the ordeal, with the promise still unfulfilled. “ Then said *Mr. Valiant-for-Truth*, ‘ I am going to my Father’s, and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought his battles, who now will be my rewarder.’ When the day that he must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river-side : into which as he went, he said ‘ Death, where is thy sting ? ’ And as he went down deeper, he said, ‘ Grave, where is thy victory ? ’ So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.”

In 1918 the eighteen-year-olds turned the scale ; and to-day, as in each succeeding generation, the victory of love rests in the hands of the eighteen-year-olds to win or to postpone. To conquer hate would be to end the strife of all the ages, but for men to know one another is not difficult, and it is half the battle.

## VII.—PRINCES AND WHIPPING BOYS.

READERS of Mark Twain\* will remember that when that simple boy Tom found himself, without choice, playing the bewildering rôle of a Prince, he bestowed the first honour of his reign on a simple boy like himself : he gave the accolade to his kneeling subject with the words : " Arise, Humphrey Marlow, Hereditary Grand Whipping-Boy of the Kingdom of England." And Humphrey, greatly abashed, rose—to find his office not only ennobled but henceforth professionally a sinecure, in that the Prince, being a more enlightened sportsman than his predecessors (or even than Charles II, who had a whipping-boy and presumably lived in a later age than Tom), preferred to receive the punishment of his own misdeeds rather than to see them visited on a paid substitute. At this point, moreover, Humphrey Marlow does not disappear out of the story. He becomes the companion of the Prince, who, very early in the proceedings, "had an hour with him which he counted clear gain, since he got much enlightenment and needful information out of it." The Court was naturally scandalised, for it was even said that they called each other by their Christian names. But Tom was not a Prince for nothing, and could insist on having his way.

Now, if the seventeenth or eighteenth century (it matters not which, if either) abolished the office of whipping-boy from the households of English princes, the nineteenth century did a great deal to revive it on a far larger and less picturesque scale. For the whipping-boy system, highly organised as befitted an age of "mass production," was found to be an essential of "The Industrial Revolution," which, as everyone knows, was the triumphant product of the nineteenth century. Everyone knows—but it is worth while to be reminded of some part, at least, of what happened in that great change in order that the inevitableness of the whipping-boy may become clear.

In the course of a few years your traditional half-dozen hand-loom weavers in a little tiled shed became merely a picturesque memory. For a great new enlightenment was thrown on them, in the shape of a thousand huge chimneys which were to improve them out of existence altogether : the age of smoke and steel and gold had arrived. The countryside was taken seriously in hand, and taught not to waste its time on larks and wild flowers and clear waters and dreaming trees, which do not pay dividends—at any rate in nineteenth century currency : on this waste ground the cathedrals of industry, black and businesslike, were erected, and in them the great golden image of Production was served unremittingly by hundreds of thousands for twelve or more hours a day.

\* *The Prince and the Pauper.*

Huge tracts of country underwent this kind of improvement—especially Lancashire, the vales of Southern Yorkshire and patches of the Midlands—and all this could not happen without its effect on the character and fortune of the inhabitants. England, it was confidently believed (in spite of a contrary view held by Mr. Ruskin and a few crankey parsons), became very great, because she became very rich. Yet no one can accuse us of disrespect if we classify this new wealth into at least three rough and unequal parts—the truly immense and imposing richness of a few tens of thousands of families, the comparative well-to-do-ness of a much larger body of people, and the undeniable poverty of a good many millions. From this third class, as was only natural, the whipping-boys of the nineteenth century were recruited, not to say “pressed,” and trained to an unheard-of efficiency in their office. If Charles II had drawn his whipping-boy from a village or at least from a London very little bigger than Hyde Park to-day, the Princes of the nineteenth century had theirs provided for them out of the square miles and miles of uniform black streets which make up two-thirds of every well-organised modern city.

It is time to turn to the Princes. Who were they?—indeed, who are they still? Their royalty, in most cases, is less one of blood than of circumstance, and it is—at least in many cases—none the less real for that, as has been shown in many fields of national need. Their crowns, worn sometimes so modestly as to offend no one, are of gold—for their fathers are the Kings of Industry or belonged in some other way to the first class or the top part of the second of those three into which we said the new wealth of the realm was divided. For the rest they are mainly simple boys who, like Mark Twain's hero, find themselves, without choice, playing the difficult rôle of princes. Their difficulties are indeed very considerable and, on the whole, are those common to all princes in any time or place whatsoever. To begin with, they are not the choosers of their great good-fortune or of its corresponding responsibility, so that they do not always value the one enough or recognise the other. The training they usually receive as rulers is in some respects miserably inadequate, and, like most princes, they live in a charmed and charming circle of their own which hides from them the very naked truth of how the rest of the world lives. Growing up thus in ignorance of other men's lot, they are apt enough to despise them good-naturedly and to be unjust to them thoughtlessly. Their own days are very full and busy, partly in learning those things from books which should fit them to take their places among the rulers of their kingdoms, and partly in every knightly exercise which can make men fine of body and free of mind. Their wealth, or rather their fathers', has procured for them immunity from almost all the elementary “dirty” work which their own hands would have helped to do in a simpler generation: *that* has now become the province, without choice, of the whipping-boys of their own age who bear a heavy burden—sometimes together with the slings and arrows of an altogether outrageous fortune. But it must expressly be said that, if some of these princes are inhumanly idle, most of them are as good average men as you will find anywhere in the world. More than that, an increasing

number of them hear—like the young Prince Buddha from his guarded palace—the discordant cries of the less lucky world outside, and become deeply restless and anxious to help. If you would see the Princes, battalions of them at a time, you will find them in the *Public Schools\** of England. And if you would see the whipping-boys—nineteen individuals to every one in those schools—you must look at all the boys between the ages of 14 and 18 in the *factories, mines and workshops* of England.

So the parable has ended—some will exclaim—in that well-worn controversy which circles round the unique public-school system of the country. There is much to be said on both sides, but it will not be said here. All that concerns us, from the point of view of Toc H., is the gap which yawns between the public-school boy and his nineteen industrial brothers of equal age on whom, for his very board and lodging, he ultimately depends. The gap is, apparently, nobody's fault, for you cannot indict anything so arbitrary as a slice of years called the nineteenth century or any animal so shortsighted as the Industrial Revolution. What matters is not recrimination, but the closing of the gap—a gap, in this case, in the living body of a nation, a wound already touched in too many places with poison which, if suffered to run unchecked, might bring death to the whole body in years to come.

Toc H., in recruiting its post-war members, looks equally to the prince and the whipping-boy, the schools and the factories. And it finds them extraordinarily like Tom and Humphrey in Mark Twain's story—two boys who were strangers and easily become friends. Tom is just as shocked as ever to discover how Humphrey is expected (and become, through long habit, content) to bear the discomforts and limitations which are the price of the pleasure of princes; and Humphrey, for his part (having assured himself, that this prince is not less human or more gifted than himself), is forthcoming with "much enlightenment and needful information." As members of Toc H. they fall into calling each other by their Christian names—whether it scandalises royal circles or not. For, if you go to the bottom of the matter, Tom and Humphrey both turn out to be Princes, and will have their way in the end.

### VIII.—WILLIAM, WILLIE AND BILL.

Now the small class of princes at one end of a scale and the big mass of whipping-boys at the other do not between them cover every man in the country—and nothing less than every man completes the membership of "Every-man's Club." A fine student of human nature has observed that the real cleavage between men in our land is made by the different kinds of schooling which different boys receive (and not by the number of collars worn by them per week, or by the comparative wealth of their fathers). Education in

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\* It is necessary to remind readers outside England that this is a totally false name for these *private* schools. See further on the next page.

England† has, up to the present run into three main types of schools, not even a threefold system, for they are very untidily related to one another. An educational ladder is often referred to, but so many of the rungs are missing that a boy's mind needs abnormally long legs, combined with luck and pluck, to climb to the top if he happens to start from the bottom. As it is, the vast majority of boys are sent, free and compulsorily, to *Elementary Schools* up to the age of 14: at that point of physical, mental and spiritual crisis in a boy's life they go out to take their place in the world's work beside grown men. Thus do they turn their backs on the school door at the very moment when to others of their contemporaries, more blessed by an accident of parentage, that door is opening on to its very best prospect—the dawning love of books and day dreams, comradeship, and cricket as a great game. A second order of boyhood, far smaller but still great in numbers, is meanwhile in the *Secondary Schools*, the varied and imposing array of grammar schools, county schools, company schools, where boys learn by day, both in class-room and on cricket ground, but do not sleep at night. On this level a boy wears his school-badge on his cap as symbol of a real corporate life, for which his father pays a very moderate fee. If about 1,200 boys' schools in England come under this category a tenth of them\* stand aside from the rest to form the third type, the *Public Schools*—a name which worries the stranger but seems natural to the Englishman, seeing that these are the only schools in the country for boys between 11 and 18 which are (with a few exceptions) private in their ownership and expensively exclusive in their character. Here a boy not only works and plays, but lives and moves and has his whole being for two-thirds of every year: his fond mother delivers him over bound to the mercies of a schoolmaster. And the schoolmaster, on his side, in most instances, devotes two-thirds of his working hours—from the time when his B.A. gown is painfully new to the day when, as a grey-headed man, he retires on an inadequate pension—to successive generations of such boys. The very closeness of this partnership between men and boys in the service, as they feel it to be, of one school-name, makes for a tradition at once wide and narrow and very deep, which distinguishes those who have been subjected to it from other men and exasperates a good many who have not. Foreign observers are wont to admire or caricature the product as "The English Gentleman," and English history (until very recent years) has accepted it as "the ruling class."

These three types of training—the first roughly applied to the "working class," the second to the "lower middle class," and the third to "the upper middle-plus-upper class"—have been thus set out at a little length because they go a very long way to the crea-

† This dreadful insularity must be forgiven, for the Scottish people, caring more for learning, has fared better in its system, and the democracies of the Dominions do not repeat or even understand the picturesque anomalies and obstinate vested interests which hamper education in the Old Country.

\* 127, according to the *Public Schools Year Book* for 1921.



"Gartness"—a fine house in Manchester (p. 27).



Cheltenham : the estaminet where the Branch begins by consuming fish and chips (p. 28).

tion of the much-laboured "Social Problem," which is at root a problem, once more, of misunderstanding. It is therefore a matter which must vitally concern Toc H., a brotherhood already numbering in its ranks those three eighteen-year-olds: Tom, who went to an elementary school so long ago that it scarcely counts, as he thinks; and Dick, who has knocked about a bit in various offices since he left his grammar school; and Harry, who was at Winchester until last July and who, after seven years of such a life, finds reading for the Bar a tedious and unreal occupation. The first job of "Social Service"—that is, service of that national society to which they were equally born heirs—is thus put before Tom and Dick and Harry at the start as the task of getting to know each other. This, as we have hinted, has not been found by Talbotousians so arduous or so unthankful a piece of work as less imaginative people often picture it. Act number I, then, is assumed to be over—and it has been a merry one, full of point and interest. These three individuals in the nation, at all events, have not been permanently held at arm's length by circumstances, schoolmasters or parents. They now respect each other, like each other, rag each other, teach each other continually. And already they stand together, looking round for a job of service which seems to need someone to do it, and which may find three heads better than one.

Both the means and the spirit which have been brought to bear upon the Social Problem by its would-be solvers have varied very greatly at different stages, but this is not the place to excursion into Queen Elizabeth's idea of the poor or Lord Shaftesbury's. The time when children of six worked fifteen hours a day in mines or were pushed up chimneys to clean them have gone by (though not so long ago, after all), and even in the oldest villages rows of little girls no longer bob white caps, bountifully provided for such ceremony, to Squire as he passes up the grave-yard to church. These things seem to us now as cruel or as comic as many things in our accepted way of life to-day will rightly seem to our successors in the year of Grace 2,000. We must not stray further back than yesterday—and that only because to quite a number of people yesterday has not yet clearly given place to to-day.

Yesterday, then (assuming that the war took place, like a most potent Scrooge-vision, in the night between), the elder brothers† of our Tom, Dick and Harry were less happy in their relations to one another. Tom's elder brother Bill was earning what passed for "good money" ("mustn't grumble," he used to say) at the wire works, which was his fifth job since leaving school; Dick's brother Willie went straight from the Haberdasher's School into a large haberdasher's shop in the city—which was merest coincidence, implying no sort of wire-pulling; and William, Harry's elder brother, had passed from Winchester to Cambridge, had just come down, and was supposed to be "eating his dinners" at the Temple,

† It seems that they all received the same name at their christening, but this history will know them by the names invariably used by their respective parents at home.

in preparation not so much for the practice of a barrister as the management of a pleasant fortune some day. For the rest, they were all really good fellows, popular with the best people in their respective circles. Bill, probably, had the best natural brain which he had not been much called upon to test, Willie was a bit of an artist in his own way, and might have done something if anyone had encouraged him, and William certainly had taste combined with an excellent business head.

William and Willie, as fate would have it, only encountered each other once. Their respective schools did not play each other at cricket, or they might at least have spent one summer afternoon together. As it was, they met with the counter of the haberdasher's shop between them; a very "seasonable" striped tie changed hands and the interview ended with a comment on the Test Match and a frank smile on both sides. William and Bill, however, came across each other at close quarters in odd hours, some of which they happened to spend in the men's club of a School Mission. Such meetings were very genial, but the freedom of both parties was subject to a very clear, if tacit, condition—that William, as a comparative stranger "in them parts," was to decide and command the affair throughout, and that Bill, "man and boy" there for over twenty years and with his old school just round the corner, should fall in with this arrangement as a matter of course. This, it is only just to say, he did—so cheerfully and to their mutual satisfaction, that the old phrase about "ordering one's self lowly and reverently to one's betters" would be solemnly ludicrous as applied to his behaviour. William played his part, by virtue of a divine right, strenuously if intermittently, and modestly and gracefully as befits a gentleman. Their intercourse was destined to stop at that. For, William's father getting ill, certain family affairs began to loom ahead of him, and he passed out of the phase of "social work," never in the same intimate, glad, human way to know it again. As for Bill, he was annexed by a young lady (he called her his "bird"), and in due course left the club altogether. Only during his last leave from France his young wife came across a photograph signed "Yours sincerely William Something-or-other" (handwriting is not taught in the Public Schools) and asked him who it was. "One of the gents at our club—used to be anyway. Not a bad sport, neither." One may, if one chooses, surmise that William and Bill would have voted on opposite sides at the next Election and have said some excessively bitter and foolish things in the heat of the moment about each other—not as remembered individuals but under the labels of Genus: "fellow" and Species: Socialist or Capitalist. Not every promise of friendship between two such men as William and Bill has run away like that into the desert sand, but it would be safe to say that by far the greater number (of a total never large) did so in the time we have called yesterday.

Then came sudden night and the darkness of the war, lighted here and there with intolerable flashes which were brighter than day. One of these revealed for an instant three men, a private, a sergeant and a subaltern, utterly unconscious of each other's individual existence, a mile apart as links in a single ragged line, who stood up simultaneously as the whistle blew and scrambled over a mud-bank into the open. The flash of the next instant saw them go down, all three together, sightless faces to the mud, while the line grew yet more ragged in passing on. That one instant wrought truth for these three out of what had seemed an illusion. Bill, Willie and William had sealed their compact together after all.

And the pity of it! That they should have died to realise what, to the great gain of the world and of themselves, they might have lived to enjoy.

#### IX.—A FAMILY AFFAIR.

Toc H. is, and wishes to remain, a family and not merely an institution. This conception lies at the very root of its life. It ruled that large household of faith in Flanders, and it continues to rule what promises to be a still larger household in all the doings of to-day. The family idea is, of course, nearly as old as the hills, and certainly governed the action of men and animals in the Garden of Eden. It is, therefore, the simplest and most natural of all relationships, which is not to say that it is always the easiest to maintain. History contains warning enough of what disasters happen when the family idea breaks down. To take two only—because in the better future of these Toc H. is very vitally concerned—the present condition of industry and of the Church will suffice. Time was when master and man were, in a conscious sense, members of a family. They knew each other intimately over the bench at which both of them worked. They had their differences (as indeed most families do), but however bitter these, they were at least expressed “as man to man,” not distantly by the medium of printed notices or the mouths of trade union officials. There was daily meeting between them, generally a clear understanding and loyalty, and often affection. Those days are gone, and only the most Utopian reformer hopes to see them return in the same form. Machinery and “big business” have taken their place. The directors of a joint stock company, meeting in a board room in London, have never even seen the faces of the thousand men who dig coal for them in Wales, much less said “good morning” to them or eaten in the same room. Family feeling between master and man has not perished utterly from modern industry, but the instances of it are rare enough to be thought specially odd or praiseworthy.

In the other case, that of the Christian Church, the family bond is constantly failing and having to be renewed by conscious effort. Here, as in industry, it is the great scale to which the body has

grown which so often overlies and crushes the spirit. Twelve men, all citizens of one little nation, could live together (not without their family quarrels), could walk with their Master and work with Him, could share His portion of suffering and joy, could accept His tokens of their family unity round one supper-table. And in a later time—the body of the Church being wonderfully grown and much distraught—a man could come forward, under the simple law of love to every living creature, to find within the Church a true family again: Francis and his first few Italians trod the Apennines, preaching and praising, healing and working, as though these had been the slopes of Galilee. But always the “primitive” order passes, the spirit flowers less easily among the weeds of the letter, love is spread over so wide a field that it grows thin, is cooled by cautiousness or made bitter by intrigue for place and power. The Church visible to-day, by a common turn of phrase, is still “God’s family on earth,” but how many individual congregations are families in the simplest, truest, most human and so most divine sense? There are church buildings in which that travel-stained fisherman St. Andrew, were he to enter at 11 o’clock on a Sunday morning, would be hustled behind a pillar by a sidesman who knew his job. There are churches so respectable that merely humble-hearted people feel uncomfortable in them, and others so poor in purse and place that the really “good churchgoer” passes them by. And yet in every one of these congregations there are so many individuals who would like to follow Love and restore the brotherhood which a multitude of forms and party cries has scattered into a variety of wildernesses. Supposing that, one day, the Church ceased to be mainly an institution (as it is to most people) and became once more a family? Supposing that it ceased to be respectable, and became joyfully dangerous? Supposing that, oblivious of its Sunday clothes, it set out on a series of adventures, as muddy as the war, and as absurdly impossible as the Kingdom of Heaven? Supposing—but we must not suppose too much all at once.

Toc H. is a young creature as yet, and is clearly to be subject to the common range of human temptations. It is, in truth, at present a family, and it clings passionately to the plan of remaining one. As it grows—rapidly and ravenously as any growing family of which we have ever heard—its temptation to become an institution, a machine with ever more perfect mechanism, must increase. Secretaries, printed forms, typewriters and waste-paper baskets already belong to the convenient discomforts of its life, but it persists in regarding them with famous good-humour as its servants and not its masters. After all the most modest human family submits to the necessity of internal discipline and recognises a due division of labour among its members. It is only when one brother does so well for himself in the world that he ceases to write home or, feeling himself so immensely more clever than the rest, tries to manage the whole inheritance, that family dissensions arise and the split comes. Toc H., whatever its failings, has grown by virtue of an inner family feeling, which the onlooker has perhaps regarded rather as one of sheer enjoyment than of what, without much oratory on the subject,

it more deeply has been—the spirit of selfless service of each for all. If ever snobbishness from within should shorten its breath or a great top-hamper of organisation should cramp the style of its limbs, it is to be hoped that Toc H. will decide to join the old soldiers and "simply fade away." Which contingency, in our present temper, we must be excused for being unable to contemplate.

The family system, then, which expresses itself statically, so to speak, in the fellowship of Toc H., must find corresponding expression, dynamically, in the service which the fellowship sets out to give. In a world in which every single ideal has been so tested that only the deepest-founded loyalties remain unshaken, the idea of "social work" must have suffered change. William's relation to Willie never, as we have seen, got as far as being consciously "work": it remained at the stage of common politeness in a matter of business. William's dealings with Bill, on the other hand, were known as "social work"—to William himself a hobby combined with a genuine sense of duty, and to his fond aunts as an admirable, if rather wayward, instance of the goodness of his character. On the whole this was not one of the deepest-founded loyalties in his life, and so the whole idea of it was severely shaken, even before the war intervened. His younger brother Harry, as we have already said, tends to approach Tom and Dick from a different angle. Perhaps the difference can be most clearly expressed by saying that, whereas William, before the war, tried to do his social work *for* Bill, Harry, after the war, is setting out to offer his service to the community *alongside* Tom and Dick. An age of patronage (however pleasantly disguised) has now to give place to an age of partnership. Social service must no longer stand as an outward institution, but spring as an inner impulse out of the family life of men together.

Toc. H. has been getting into the way of using one or two simple phrases to sum up its part in this matter of service. It fosters, in the first place, what it calls, for convenience, "*the sheep-dog spirit*." Now, though dog-fanciers may recognise a special breed of shagginess known at the shows as a sheep-dog, all natural historians are aware that sheep-dogs are born just dogs and, being of any shape or colour though convenient in size, may be made into sheep-dogs at the instance of the shepherd. The chief characteristics of a complete sheep-dog are three—that it possesses an average intelligence, that it has been properly trained, and that it works for the shepherd and the sheep, not for itself. None other is the outfit and the outlook of the human sheep-dog. He possesses average intelligence (whether it has been encouraged or stultified by a course of Eton or of the Council School is a matter of secondary importance); he is ready to undergo practical training for the service he undertakes; and he works not for himself but for his particular flock of sheep and for the Shepherd from whom his commission is ultimately derived. Here is your Scout Troop that needs a Scoutmaster, your lads' club which is falling to bits for lack of one or two men to pull it together. Tom and Dick and Harry, bringing average intelligences, very differently trained it may be, to bear on such common problems, learn to do the job by doing it, and round up

between them a very presentable and useful flock of boys. There is much less fear, at the moment, that the flocks all over the country should run short than that the sheep-dogs should be worked to a standstill. At least let no one say that these human dogs, once busy with their flocks, are wont to let their tails droop through boredom or weariness.\*

And another name which Toc. H. members are beginning to apply to themselves is that of *stretcher-bearers* to the community. Here is a delightful boy of seventeen landed in a police-court, either because his spirits are too high for the width of his street or because he has no "people" worth mentioning. For the moment he is badly down, but the local branch of Toc H., happening to pass that way, may pick him up on its friendly stretcher, wipe his slate for him and call him "Brother"—for the first time in his experience. And there is also the member in special difficulties, the ex-soldier with no livelihood, disabled or sick or discouraged, who discovers that the family to which he now belongs has a family pride of its own which will not see him go under. Such simple things have no connection with that highly organised form of "charity" which has to buy a two-guinea ticket and dance all night in order to provide the medicine of a sick child in some hospital which the dancer has never set eyes upon, but only with "charity" in the old-fashioned sense of Love.

It is not to be supposed that the offices of sheep-dog and stretcher-bearer exhaust the openings of social service for which members of Toc H. are eligible. Wherever men meet in industry, the army, professions, learned and otherwise, the church, the farm, the club, the street—the free spirit, forthcoming towards all men, "the Christmas spirit all the year round" can have play. Service begins at home—to the man next to you in the tram, nearest to you (whether over or under matters not) in the office. If ranks are earned and preserved, as they must be, for the purpose of getting work well done, they may safely be abandoned when men are at their ease—provided Love rules, than whom there is no authority more exacting. And in the greater tasks, sufficient for the strength of the most covetous of real honour, of helping to govern a borough, a city, a county, the nation—is there no room for still more of the disinterested men, wearing—whatever their party convictions—the wristlet badge of Toc H.? Social service must embrace the Cabinet as well as the Scout-patrol.

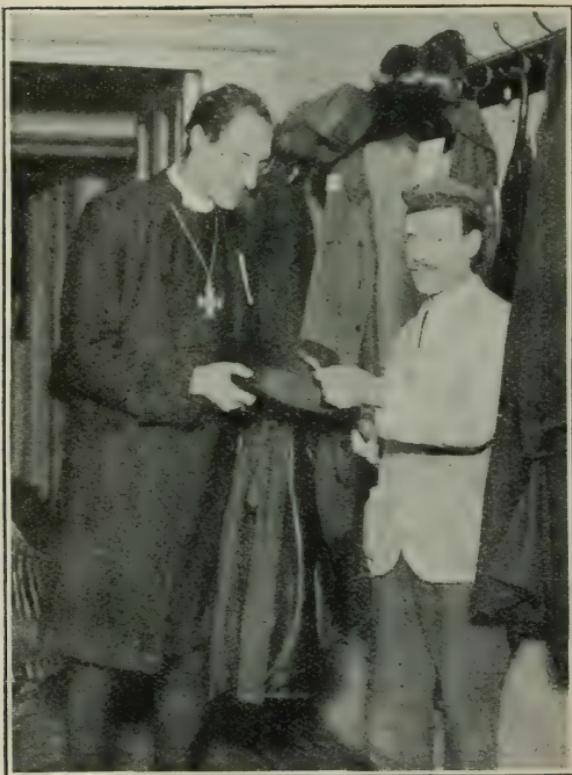
How far this spirit, which dare claim no merit for itself and which admits no idleness and no condescension in those whom it possesses, may change the world about us by being in us, is a matter for time to show. It certainly turns the conventional values of things upside down at every turn. It makes a man oblivious of the fact that his companion does not habitually wear a collar, or it induces

\* Marks I, II, and III have all got their flocks already, in the form of a boys' club apiece, not to mention individual efforts with Scouts, &c., and local branches are setting out to meet local needs.

such presence of mind on a railway journey that he omits to hand the guard a shilling for opening the door and goes off instead to thank the engine driver for preserving his life so skilfully over three hundred hair-raising miles of travel.

Moreover, it is a spirit of adventure and experiment, just as was that spirit which led Samuel Barnett, two generations ago, to bring the West to the East, the undergraduate of Oxford into contact with those who had already graduated in a much rougher and harder school. The experiment of the University Settlement was new and very daring in its time, and it marked a step forward, taken in faith and justified. To-day this particular solution—the planting of a tiny colony of curious and devoted strangers in the heart of what seemed at first to them a heathen land—is not to be counted as something final, but rather as a stage which we should have outgrown. The land is not more heathen than any other, but the strangers, clinging still to their monastic citadel in the midst of it, remain largely but welcome strangers to the end. Perhaps some Toc H., Mark X., an open house in which men of both kinds, or of all kinds, live together under a family vow, is another step (and, we believe, no small one) towards restoring to men the normal society of which modern life has cheated them. But who shall say that this is a complete solution, or more than a successful experiment? If the spirit which moves these men survives and is continually renewed in their successors (as, please God, it shall be) the understanding between them must grow too forcible to be contained in Mark Anything; it may lead them within a hundred years to seek and to create larger spaces for their life together. The Saxon mud village was good enough for our ancestors, but it would not pass the Medical Officer of Health to-day, and the city of to-day with its ugly palaces and its uglier slums may become even more intolerable to these Toc H. members of a future time. But we must not venture on pictures of a New Jerusalem which shall be built in a land once more green and pleasant. Sufficient for to-day is not only its evil—to be combated while we have strength—but also its amazing hopes.

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A Bishop and a General.

Neville Talbot (Bishop of Pretoria) who helped to found Talbot House in 1915, and Pte. Pettifer ("The General") who has helped to run it from then until now.

## APPENDIX : SOME OF THE FACTS.

**1. Dramatis Personæ.***Patron :*

H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

*Presidents :*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.  
FIELD-MARSHAL LORD PLUMER, G.C.B.*Vice-Presidents :*THE COUNTESS GROSVENOR.  
FIELD-MARSHAL LORD METHUEN, G.C.B.  
THE EARL OF CAVAN, K.P.*Trustees.*THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.  
LORD BYNG OF VIMY, G.C.B.  
MONTAGUE ELLIS.*Padre and General Secretary :*

REV. P. B. CLAYTON, M.C.

*Hon. Treasurer :*

H. J. C. PEIRS, C.M.G., D.S.O.

*Registrar and Assistant Treasurer :*

W. J. MUSTERS.

*Travelling Secretary :*

BARCLAY BARON, O.B.E.

*Secretary, Social Service Bureau.*

R. SHELSTON.

**2. Membership.**

Those who wish to become members must be proposed and seconded by members and submit to a month's probation before election. They must subscribe to the main objects of Toc H., which may be summarised as follows :—

- (a) To bring the traditions and atmosphere of the old House into ever-widening contact with the needs of civil life, both as they affect the ex-Service Member and the younger man.
- (b) To bring the best of every class together on common ground, the joint property of them all; to remove misunderstanding, and to weld the Members into a friendly fellowship with wide unselfish motives and deep spiritual ideals.

- (c) To cultivate among them the growth of the "sheep-dog spirit" towards those younger and less fortunate than themselves; to show the need for service and to direct the sense of responsibility into fruitful channels.
- (d) To provide a welcome alternative to the loneliness of town lodgings; and for this purpose, to press for the establishment of a Toc H., first a Branch, then a House, in every big city.

### **3. Subscription.**

The subscription in London or in any place where a Toc H. Hostel is in existence is from 5s. to £1 1s. od. In local branches, where there is no Hostel, it is 2s. 6d. as a minimum: of this 2s. goes to Headquarters as the branch's quota of organising expenses, and 6d. is retained for local use.

### **4. Hostels.**

The first three Houses are situated in London as follows:—

MARK I—23, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.7. (Tel. Western 3882).

MARK II—123, St. George's Square, S.W.1. (Tel. Victoria 9627).

MARK III—148, York Road, Lambeth, S.E.1. (Tel. Hop 1146).

(a) *Government.*—The conduct of each House is vested in an Hon. Warden who is appointed by the Executive Committee of Toc H.. The Warden is assisted by a Deputy Warden, a House Secretary and a small Committee, elected by the residents. The three Wardens and their Deputies form a combined Wardens' Committee. Each House also has other officers, such as its Librarian, Sports Secretary, and Churchwarden.

(b) *Charges, accommodation, etc.*—The scale of charges is a sliding one, varying from 35s. to £2 10s. Hostellers who can do so are encouraged to pay a little more than others who are less fortunately placed financially.

For this sum, residents and guests receive, besides accommodation, breakfast and dinner on every week-day, and four meals on Sunday. There are also newspapers and periodicals provided, and a good library.

There are some single bedrooms available in each House, but for the most part, in view of their size, they contain two or three beds. The domestic charge of each House is fulfilled by three old Members of "Toc H.," each with the help of his wife as Cook, and with various day-time Assistants.

Residence is probationary for the first month and renewable at the end of three. The number of residents forming the representative team in each House is as follows:—

MARK I—24.

Beds for Guests.—MARK I—10.

MARK II—21.

" " " MARK II—8.

MARK III—12.

" " " MARK III—6.

Guests from our Provincial membership are charged 5s. 6d. a day.

(c) *Guest Nights.*—One is held at each House each week, when an influx of Members is specially catered for. An average number for supper is about 70. Each visiting Member pays 1s. 6d. for his supper. After supper, the guest of the evening delivers himself, and is subjected to some friendly cross-examination. Sometimes a concert is held, or a dramatic reading, or a games evening, as the case may be.

## 5. Memorial Rooms.

Despite the most economical scale of charges, the Hostels of "Toc H." have proved self-supporting, once they are opened and furnished; and serve, moreover, as Club-centres for our local membership, and for those coming up from the provinces. To assist the preliminary task, several families, whose sons did not live to come home, have undertaken the furnishing of various rooms. Such rooms are named, or initialled (e.g., "The L.R.B. Room," "Basil's Bedroom," "W.G.C. Gladstone Room," etc.), and become the fruitful tokens of a love that forgets not, but rather fulfils.

A gift of £30 will equip a small room.

A gift of £50 will equip a room with three beds.

A gift of £100 will equip a Club-room complete.

These are large sums, but the smallest donations will be used with equal care.

## 6. Memorial Chaplaincies.

It is intended that every House opened by Toc H. shall have a resident Chaplain, who may be of any Christian denomination. Each chaplaincy shall be endowed with the sum of £5,000, which will provide the holder with a small annual income, to be supplemented if necessary out of payments by members of the local House and Branch. The Chaplain's whole time will be devoted to the needs of hostellers and other members, and to the "after-care" of young men of all kinds in the district.

Three such Memorial Chaplaincies have already been endowed.

## 7. Sport and Holidays.

The London Branch has an eight-acre sports ground at New Barnet, giving room for a Rugby ground, an Association ground, a cricket pitch, a number of tennis courts, a pavilion, and a standing camp in ideal surroundings. Captain J. D. Kelly (who started the Yorkshire Amateurs) is Association Captain for the season 1921–22, and Mr. W. H. Patterson (Kent C.C. and English team) Cricket President for the past summer. Toc H. has limited permission for the use of a private golf course at Stanmore and for some private tennis courts in London. Swimming is also catered for. A pilgrimage party of fifty Members visited Ypres at Whitsuntide, a second party in September, 1921, and a third will go over at Easter, 1922. In August, 1922, a visit to Oberammergau, in Bavaria, to see the Passion Play which is performed there every ten years, is also contemplated.

## 8. Social Service.

Each Branch will have a Social Service Secretary and will discover openings for the work of its Members in the district. Each resident in a House, if not physically disabled or too heavily pressed with work, carries out a job of social service in his spare time.

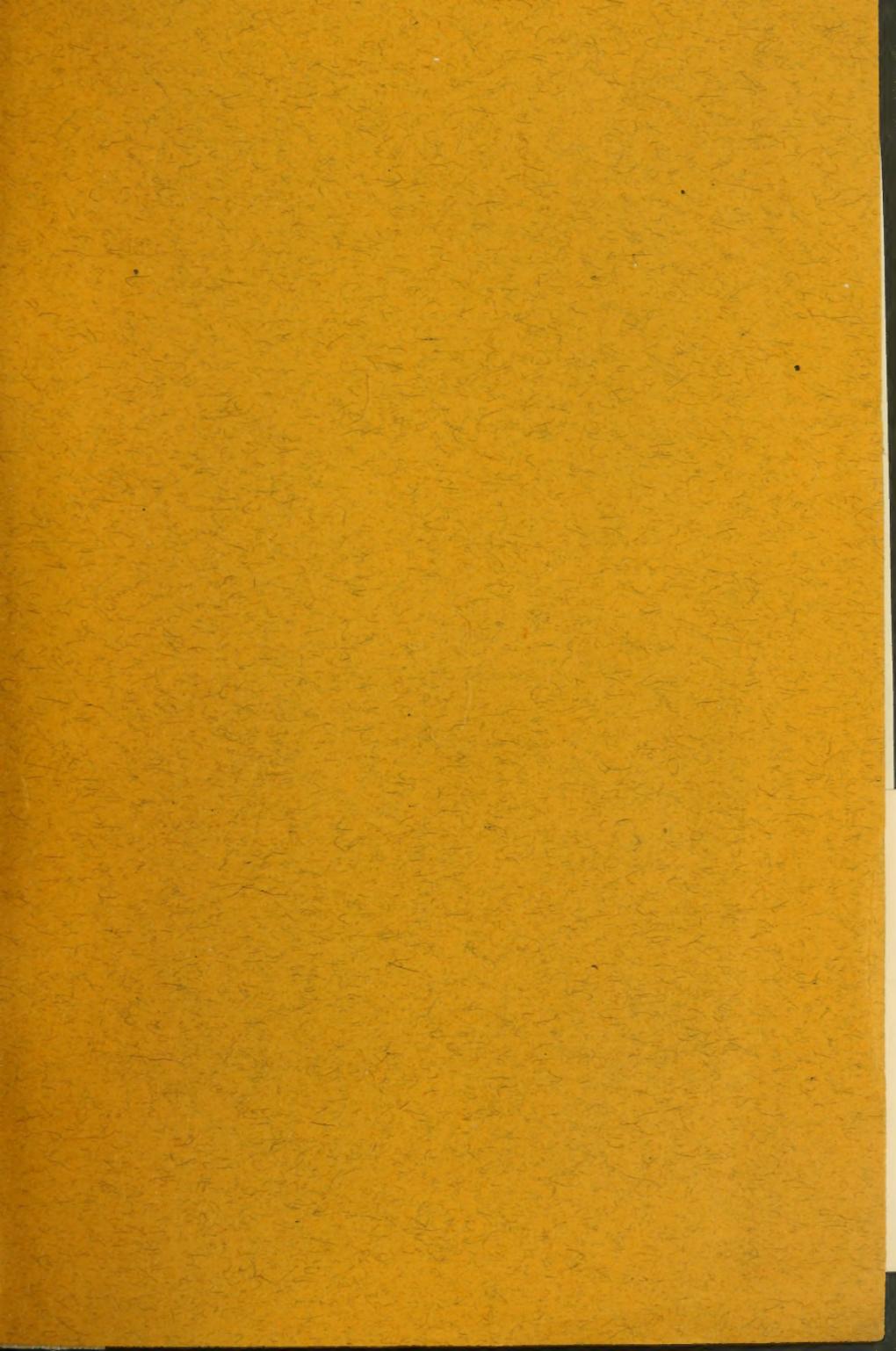
One side of the recruiting of the younger generation for service, *i.e.*, that concerned with the public and other secondary schools, is being carried on by the machinery of the Cavendish Association, which was formed in 1913 and incorporated in 1921 with Toc H. The means are simple and entirely natural. There is a system of:—

(a) *School and University Correspondents.*—Each school or college with which Toc H. is in touch has, as part of its branch organisation, a Social Service Correspondent, whose aim is to interest boys or undergraduates in social questions, and to bring them in touch with the other half of the world whose experience is so different. The Travelling Secretary of Toc H., and other speakers, drawn from a panel of public men, are constantly going the round of the schools.

(b) *Branch Correspondents.*—At the end of each term lists of boys or undergraduates leaving are sent to Headquarters. A letter is then written to each of these offering to put him in touch with the Social Service Correspondent of the Toc H. Branch in his own district. Thus a man, whether he joins the Branch or not, can begin most easily to undertake whatever kind of service most appeals to him.



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